

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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Review of the Month



A HAPPY and Prosperous New Year to all our readers; and for the great movement which we serve.

Our blackest year is gone. Gone with it let us hope are Dismay, Disappointment, Disillusion,

Desertion and Defeat. The New Year dawned to find Labour in battle array; its ranks reforming for the Big Push; its members mobilising with a new million mark as their goal.

A good omen shall we say? A sign that the ground lost in 1931 will be recovered and consolidated in 1932, with something over at the finish? That at any rate is the prevailing spirit, and it augurs well for us as it augurs ill for the curiously compounded ranks of the enemy.

And what of the temper of our movement? We drew attention last month and the month before to the astonishing enthusiasm and hopefulness in our ranks both immediately before and during the Great Debacle. No political Party ever suffered reverse so cheerily, with such éclat and with such deep conviction that it would rise again, triumphantly, to sweep the country, and at last to really govern and control. That spirit has lasted. More than decimated in voters in the country, four times decimated in the House, that customary and despairing cry of the defeated for heads upon a charger, has not been heard. Instead the leaders have taken council; our ranks line up; onward we march to conquest.

But there is work ahead. The immediate task is A Million New Mem-

bers. This will refill our coffers. Even more the great recruitment will give us the big new man-power we need. And our commissioned ranks should benefit, for have we not a great officership going begging in our movement? We want secretaries, collectors, canvassers, literature sellers, membership visitors, press correspondents, speakers, agents—indeed officers and workers of all kinds. Will a new million members be enough?

And after that? Then we believe will fall to us the biggest task. It is that great work of conveying Socialist conviction to the mass of the people. The accomplishment of this duty will alone make victory certain, or even worth having, at the next election. There is already perceptible in our movement the same blindness to realities which deceived us during the election. Many of our people moving among the unemployed and the tortured manhood that has gone through the Public Assistance Committees believe that "the tide has turned"—that soon it will flow; and then, we suppose, rush, and reverse everything? Not so, we fear; nor would we have it so.

Such reasoning leaves out of count the reactions and resources of a Government in power; and it overlooks, fatally, the lesson of the late election. One of the profoundest lessons to be then learnt was the preference of the people to a policy which conserved the Old Order, which would revive it, rebuild it and give it new life both nationally and internationally. *The people did not understand* a New Order which might replace the old; a new orientation to the problems of unemployed, finance or production based on

the Socialist theory; and they did not conceive of an international approach to these questions from the Socialist angle of the well-being of democracies throughout the world. NOR DO THEY NOW.

There also still persists in the minds of many otherwise well-disposed to Labour an innate conviction that a Party pledged to fundamental change is not the Party for the present situation. Later on, perhaps—sometime—but not just now, Labour might be trusted. And doesn't this attitude bring us to the crux of the question? *These people are not Socialists.* Yes, indeed, Labour must concentrate on this question of conversion, making sure at the same time of its own mass, and redoubling, trebling, quadrupling the effort it puts into the organisation of propaganda and the spreading of its faith.

January is the month when secretaries and all other officers ponder deeply over their lost leisure, and consider and hesitate over the problem of re-election for another year. Does the Movement know what debt it owes to its thousands of hard-working minor officers who toil and build in the dim light of local eminence that the great structure shall rise above their heads and ours, a monument to self-less sacrifice? We raise our hat to the Labour Party's local officers; and in the "L.O." and outside of it, we are their brothers.

Stick it, comrades, for another season. THIS YEAR shall be a great one!

THE LABOUR PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT.

This invaluable encyclopedia of Labour activities is now in the press and orders should be immediately placed for same. Every live Secretary values his collection of Labour Party Annual Reports and also constantly uses them for purposes of reference.

The published report will contain the report of the Executive Committee, including the financial statement of the Party; a full report of the proceedings at the Annual Conference; detailed lists of affiliations and of the delegates to the Annual Conference; and a series of Appendices of extraordinary usefulness, covering such matters as Party rules, the personnel of the Parliamentary Party, candidates and agents, and the work of organisations with which

the Labour Party works in association.

The price of a single copy of the report is 1/5 post free, but quantities are supplied at a reduced rate. Thus a Divisional Labour Party ordering one hundred copies obtains the same for £3 showing a gross profit, if sold at one shilling each, of £2. And one hundred copies per Division is the very lowest computation of what is necessary and ought to be sold.

No end of misunderstanding arises from the want of the authoritative knowledge which is contained in the Annual Report of the Labour Party, and we hope all readers of the "L.O." will see that their Party obtains a sufficient supply.

THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH MONTHLY BULLETIN.

We beg to advise our readers that owing to certain rearrangements the publication of the League of Youth Monthly Bulletin in the pages of the "Labour Organiser" will shortly be discontinued.

Negotiations have been proceeding for some time for the publication of a new and enlarged journal entirely devoted to the affairs of the League of Youth. Our readers will, we are sure, join with us in wishing a successful outcome to these proposals and a long life and prosperity to the contemplated new paper.

It has been represented to us that some of our readers desire to bind their copies of the "Labour Organiser" minus the "Bulletin" pages, and that the consecutive numbering of our pages with the "Bulletin" prevents this being done.

Pending therefore the publication of the new journal, during which period the League of Youth pages will continue to be published with the "Labour Organiser, the Bulletin will be inserted in the centre of our journal for the purpose of easy detachment, and the pages will not be numbered consecutively with our own publication as heretofore.

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The Big Campaign

We're off! The biggest membership drive in the history of our Party is now beginning. Let us look at some facts.

The Labour vote in this country is just round about 7,000,000. The potential vote is very much bigger, but never mind about that. Now Labour's membership all told, affiliated and individual, according to the last available figures was under 2,500,000.

This means that there is a margin of 4,500,000 voters who have stuck to Labour in at least three Parliamentary elections, but who are non-members of the Party. This works out at an average of over 7,000 voters *per constituency*, dear reader, you will almost certainly find the margin far, far bigger. It can even be trebled in some places.

The great campaign is designed to draw upon this vast well; to enrol one in seven of the total vote; a million at least, and as many more as the present organising resources of our movement are capable of enrolling.

And the well is even deeper than we have stated. For of our present membership well over 2,000,000 are affiliated members paying often no more than a casual and unfelt contribution of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per week, and largely unconscious of any political responsibility save voting. This 2,000,000 odd may in practice be added to our other great potential and so it increases the possibilities in every constituency to an almost incredible figure.

Now what are the prospects of enrolling these people? It can be said outright, and without fear of challenge, that in practically every constituency where in the past, systematic organised attempts have been made on the right lines to enrol members from among this margin astonishing success has resulted.

One thousand, two thousand, three thousand, even a four thousand membership figures in the Party's returns. And the bigger the membership, the more it grows. These Parties, too, are only the pioneers. Largely they have got their memberships in self-aided efforts — no national campaign, no national publicity, no "Daily Herald" reports—just consistent and systematic reaping from the field. No, no, there is no contradiction — one, two, three and four thousand memberships are so possible of attainment, that soon they must flourish in all parts of the country.

This campaign is not a campaign to convert the unconverted or to canvass the whole electorate. Essentially it is an attempt to consolidate our own ranks; to call to the colours those who have already attested. The plans will be drawn accordingly.

And here a reflection. Have you ever thought what tremendous faith in Labour some of our voters must possess? They are untouched by our organisation untended by our education; they don't read our publications; our daily paper; and hardly ever hear our point of view. Yet they vote; what faith! *What innate conviction!*

This people will make good members. In spite of the self-satisfaction of certain people in lackadaisical and inefficient Local Parties who are always condemning the non-member and protesting how much they have done to attract him, the fact remains that the great bulk of that four million (or six million if you will) *have never received a personal invitation to join the Labour Party*. That's what the campaign is to remedy.

Explanatory circulars, samples of membership application forms, leaflets, hints to canvassers, etc., have already been circulated by the Labour Party throughout the movement. A series of mass conferences at strategic centres will further enlighten and encourage our movement regarding the big push. But it is the duty of every reader of the "Labour Organiser" to leave no stone unturned until his and her Party have fully mobilised and carried out its share of the campaign.

If there are to be any shirking parties on this occasion, shame on them! The Labour machine in the country is slow, hefty, and perhaps a little unpolished in its parts. It has more of the six-wheeled lorry than the limousine about it. Yet it is not rusty, it worked *but* yesterday. And it must get out. Every worker must get out too. If you know a Party that hasn't met to consider and plan its work, even if it's not *your* Party, please get out and give a shove.

We have not thought it fit in this article to cover the ground being covered by the Party leaflet in "Hints to Canvassers." The "Labour Organiser" readers, in the main, are those on whom

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THE total affiliated membership of the Labour Party is 2,069,697. The total national income for 1930 (excluding balance brought forward) was £44,393 5s. 7d.

The total number of votes polled by Labour candidates at the late election was 6,676,468. This was 31 per cent. of the total votes cast.

The total Labour vote in the General Election 1929 was 8,366,584. This was 36.9 per cent. of the total votes cast.

Labour secured 1,188,848 more votes at the late election than it polled in 1924.

The total membership of the Trades Union Congress is 3,719,401.

By the Standing Order of the Labour Party members of the General Council of the T.U.C. are not eligible for nomination to the National E.C.

The number of delegates to the Annual Conference of the Labour Party has been radically reduced as a result of the operation of the new Rules.

Delegates are now appointed on a basis of one delegate for each 5,000 members or part thereof, except that where the Individual and Women's membership of a D.L.P. exceeds 2,500 an additional woman delegate may be appointed.

The National E.C. of the Party comprises 23 members elected by the Conference with a Treasurer elected in the same manner, plus the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, who is an ex-officio member of the E.C.

The Secretaryship of the Labour Party is now a permanent office for "so

long as his work gives satisfaction to the National E.C. and Party Conference."

The Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, who is the Secretary of the Labour Party is also its Treasurer, and as such he is a member of the E.C.

The gross affiliation fees received by the Labour Party according to its last published report were as follow :—

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Co-operative Societies, | £400. |
| Labour Parties, | £5,623 1s. 2d. |
| Trades Unions, | £35,073 1s. 4d. |
| Socialist Societies, | £307 17s. |

The upkeep of the Parliamentary Labour Party's office is borne by the National E.C. of the Labour Party out of its General Fund.

The affiliated membership of the Co-operative Party is 3,281,971, representing 423 Societies.

The total number of Co-operators in the country according to the latest available figures is 6,402,966.

The Co-operative Party polled 249,512 votes at the General Election. Only one candidate, however, secured election out of eighteen who went to the poll.

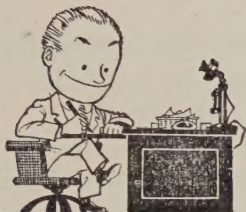
The average net daily sales of the "Daily Express" (the second largest circulation) show a drop of nearly 30,000 in the last four months. The figure for December was 1,653,245.

On the other hand the "Daily Herald" shows an increase during the same period of 135,000. The daily sales are now over 1,400,000. The "Daily Herald" is therefore climbing hand-over-fist for second place. Then for the foremost!

(Concluded from previous page.)

the task will fall of marshalling this advance, and to these we would say, finally, "Don't let a single Party, or unit of the Party fail in its duty. Call all to their post, and steadily, minutely and systematically prepare and put forward the material which the canvassers will need for the campaign."

Y^e Great Million New Members Campaign



ONE OF YE GREAT MEN OF
TRANSPORT HOUSE SAYETH :
"WE WANT A MILLION NEW
MEMBERS."



EVERY GOOD SECRETARY
AND EVERY GOOD AGENT
JUMPETH TO IT !



AND 'YE OLD SYMPATHISER'
NOW BECOMETH A MEMBER,
AND PAYETH HIS SUB—



TO YE GREAT JOY OF OUR
WORTHY TREASURER, WHO
SAYS WE UGHT TO BE
MILLION-AIRES.

OUR COMPETITION

Who of the above four men is of greatest moment to the Party? There are 24 ways of placing them. In the office of the "Labour Organiser" we have placed away a sealed envelope containing the Editor's choice, and readers may send in theirs. To the sender of the first letter opened on January 31st whose placing agrees with the Editor's we will present

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"THE POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN BRITAIN."

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NOTES and NOTIONS

PROVED, POOLED, PROOFED
AND PRINTED



A useful idea recently ventilated is that of appointing a Party visitor or visitors. New members should always be seen shortly after their entry by some person other than the collector if possible, and old members who do not function and delegates who do not attend, should receive the special attention of the "District Visitor." We think there is excellent common-sense behind this innovation, and the duties falling to the new office should be by no means unpleasant. This is a direction in which every member can help.

There will shortly be a big push to stir up Local Labour Parties to the importance of appointing Literature Secretaries. The Literature Department has been said to be the Cinderella of Labour activities. But ought it not to be the Prince? Local Labour Parties who do not set up a Literature Department, and appoint a Secretary specifically to look after this side of Party work, sadly neglect their opportunities both for propaganda and for profit. Is it not astonishing that in 1932 it should be necessary to repeat that the printed word gets home more often than the spoken one?

Following the great Membership Campaign there is to be a little breathing space in which the County Divisions will get down to their work of fighting the District Council Elections. Immediately thereafter the Labour Party intend to launch a series of Organisation Conferences throughout the country to be followed by a further series of Constituency Conferences with a view to pressing into effect the proposals for developing the Party which will be made at the main Conferences. The number of central Conferences contemplated is nearly three dozen.

A New Recreation.—We suggest to our readers that at the next Executive Meeting or Party Meeting they mentally make a computation of the average age of the meeting. The result will probably prove a little disconcerting, even if one gallantly credits every lady with being much younger than she looks. We have tried this thing ourselves, and find that the average age of the last six meetings we have attended ranged from 38 to 55 — which is what one might expect if we are to accept the gibe that we are a middle-aged Party!

But what a reflection on our work among the youth of the nation. Even to-day the great Membership Campaign is of course specially directed to enrol the people who have voted for us, the great mass of whom are by no means young. We shall have to follow up this Campaign by some earnest thinking and practical proposals as to how the youth of the nation is to be approached and attracted to our Party.

A number of Parties at the late General Election found themselves in difficulties in securing a qualified election agent to take over the conduct of the campaign. Many of these Parties left the matter to the last minute, in spite of warnings, and then looked to Head Office to produce rabbits out of a hat. There is a better way and we suggest that Local Parties should now look around their ranks and induce those otherwise likely to prove capable organisers to enrol as students in the Labour Party Scheme for Study and Examination. One or two competent people trained in each constituency would prove a tremendous asset when local elections come along, or when Parliamentary elections must be manned without the aid of a permanent

agent. We suggest that where necessary Local Parties would find it a good investment to pay the small entrance fee themselves.

Everybody in the Party would like to see a more scientific plan for countering the enemy's speaking campaigns, than we have at present. Many speeches are given by Tory leaders which go entirely unanswered, and very often too a following Labour meeting may have no special relation or give no reply to a damaging speech from a front rank opponent. The only way to remedy this state of affairs is for Local Parties to keep the Head Office primed with information regarding the movements and speeches of leading Members of the Government. Tory and Liberal Headquarters are not exactly in the habit of sending their speakers' plans on to Transport House. It is only when fairly complete information is to hand that any adequate preparation can be made to meet the attacks and propaganda of the enemy.

Speaking of speakers' plans reminds us that few Local Labour Parties have ever adopted the admirable system which has always been a distinguishing feature in Methodist circuits. We refer to the working out of a speakers' plan. We are a long way yet in the majority of districts from organising a steady course of weekly or other periodic propaganda meetings. There is no reason why this defect should not be got over, for a tremendous work of education has to be done. With regular meetings fixed a panel of speakers could be "planned" for each date they are free and the resulting programme of meetings, meeting places and speakers be published. This at any rate is the Methodist plan, and it has mostly worked well. We have also known the plan work well when applied to a big series of regular outdoor meetings, though this was some years ago. Anyway, we commend the matter to the attention of our large divided boroughs and to Federations in congested areas, where this system has much to commend it, not only because it is a system, but because its adoption would tend to encourage regular propaganda and the fixing of more regular meetings.

There exists an astonishing difference between Parties regarding their social

activities. Some Parties seem constantly engaged in a round of socials, whist drives and dances, and make a lot of money thereby, and these Parties too seem to develop their membership amazingly. There are other Parties which one never remembers to have had any sort of social gathering, and we fear that the atmosphere in many of these places is reminiscent of the crepe-hatted gentleman whom the daily press are fond of depicting as the representative of repression, taxation, officiousness and other obnoxiousities. After all a little relaxation is good for one, and it is certainly good for Local Parties.

Therefore, has your Party a Social Committee? It is not in our opinion a good thing to discuss at Party meetings all the details concerning the organisation of the various social enterprises in which a Party engages. Nor is the Executive meeting quite the place to plan too many details. An *ad hoc* Social Committee is the thing, and in most Parties such a body is worth establishing.

The question sometimes arises whether sufficient opportunity is given to Party officials to consult among themselves regarding the problems of organisation. The ordinary Party meeting does not really fulfil all that is required, and it would be helpful in most Parties if steps were taken to periodically call together the officials only, including of course the ward or polling district secretaries. Problems of organisation would be discussed at such a meeting from an intimate angle, which is not always possible with the stereotyped agendas at the regular Party meetings.

The Million Member Campaign is bringing the officers and Parties in many places up against the fact that insufficient attention has been given in the past to collecting records of supporters. The canvass records of the last election were none too reliable, and as usual in many places they simply do not exist. We know of Parties with votes running up to nearly 30 thousand who, however, could not readily give the names of two hundred supporters outside the immediate ranks of the Party. We discuss elsewhere the Million Member Campaign, but for the future it would be well that more attention be given to this important question.

THE LABOUR PARTY

League of Youth

Monthly Bulletin

EDITOR :

W. ARTHUR PEACOCK.

No. 19 (NEW SERIES)

JANUARY, 1932

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE Annual Conference of the League of Youth held at Transport Hall, London, on the second Saturday in January, provided yet a further illustration of the enthusiasm of Labour's young people.

One hundred and fifty delegates attended and many travelled long distances in order to attend. Mr. Paul Williams ably presided over the gathering and the telling and effective speeches from the body of the hall revealed that there is growing up a body of young workers of whom the Labour Movement might well be proud.

The interest of the adult movement was displayed by the presence of Mr. George Lathan, J.P., Chairman of the Labour Party Executive, and by a letter to the delegates from Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson.

In his letter Mr. Henderson congratulated the League upon the excellent work it had done and directed attention to the larger opportunities which were opening up for young people, enabling them to take an effective part in building up the membership of the Labour Party.

The Chairman's Call.

From the movement abroad there came greetings through the Young Socialist International to which the League has latterly affiliated. Another encouraging message came from the University Labour Federation of which Mr. Arthur Greenwood is President.

In his address to the Conference, the Chairman, Mr. Paul Williams, stated that, although the year through which we had just passed had been no ordinary year, the League of Youth had maintained itself with such determination and virility as to demonstrate the vast scope for the expression of the potentialities of our Youth Movement. The past year had seen the centenary celebrations of Michael Faraday, yet

the past year had seen the increasing privation of masses of the people—the paradox of want in the midst of potential plenty. He urged the delegates to use their influence to secure the co-operation of their Branches in the Labour Party Campaign for increased individual membership and to have serious regard to the international side of our work, as the result of our affiliation to the Socialist Youth International.

"Let us," he concluded, "reiterate our determination not to be helpless spectators of the wrongs of people but vigorous, intelligent and persistent builders for the achievement of the Socialist Cause."

The report of the Advisory Committee, which was submitted to the Conference, stated that application had been made for affiliation to the Socialist Youth International and an international membership card had been issued as a receipt for the international affiliation fee of 2d., payable by each member of the League.

Resolutions.

In response to the request made at the last Conference, the National Executive Committee had secured power from the Annual Conference of the Party to extend voting power to League of Youth delegates upon the General Committee of Local and Divisional Labour Parties.

A pamphlet dealing with the League of Youth organisation had been prepared and is now in circulation which should prove to be helpful to those taking an active part in League of Youth work.

Contact has been established with the Workers' Sports' Association, who are willing to undertake organisation of the sports side of the League and affiliation has been effected to the Youth Hostels Association.

The Advisory Committee has formed a Camping Sub-Committee which has supplied information upon camping and a national camp was held at Withyam, in August.

The demand for a League of Youth journal and for special literature suitable for distribution amongst members and prospective members of the League of Youth was contained in resolutions which were carried. Mr. W. W. Henderson, the Secretary of the Press and Publicity Department of the Labour Party, gave a very interesting survey of the services which were available and of the proposals which were in hand for the future organisation of those services. He stated that the possibility of securing a League of Youth journal depended entirely upon the guarantee of support which could be secured from the Branches.

Age Limit.

A resolution to increase the age-limit from 25 to 30 was defeated and a resolution asking for provision of facilities at the conference to discuss "all matters affecting young workers" was defeated. The chief argument against it was that the time of the Conference should be devoted to matters affecting League of Youth development, leaving matters of policy to the Party Conference.

An Advisory Committee elected upon an area basis, was the object of one resolution which was passed and another asked the Advisory Committee to give more attention to the development of Branches of the League in rural

areas. Resolutions were carried asking the Advisory Committee to consider the possibility of arranging a Continental tour for members of the League and another resolution asked for affiliation to the National Council of Labour Colleges.

New Committee.

Considerable discussion took place upon the subject of the next Annual Conference. It was felt that more time was needed to discuss the many things which come before this gathering. Resolutions were carried providing that the next Annual Conference should be a full day conference and should be held in Leeds or Manchester.

The new Advisory Committee elected by the Conference consists of:

A. Alman, Central Hackney.
Miss D. Dewinter, East Fulham.
J. Edwards, Birmingham.
D. W. Fido, Balham and Tooting.
Miss M. Sayer, Wealdstone.
L. Stubbs, Cambridge.
H. Tindall, East Hull.
K. Westwood, Surrey Federation.
H. Wickham, Buckingham.
Paul Williams, St. Marylebone.
W. A. Wren, Eltham.
Miss Barnett, Southgate.

At the first meeting of the newly-elected committee held immediately after the conference, Mr. W. Arthur Peacock, Editor of "The Bulletin" was co-opted to the Committee.

During the evening the provincial delegates were the guests of the London Leagues at a successful dance held at Lambeth Baths.

The International

THE Labour Party League of Youth has affiliated to the Young Socialist International in accordance with the decision of its annual conference. Leagues of Youth are called upon to pay 2d. a member affiliation fee in return for which an International Membership Card is issued.

The International's pleasure at this affiliation is revealed by its announcement in its Press Service. Leagues of Youth need, however, to see that the terms of the resolution are strictly complied with. The individual membership fee of 2d. ought now to be collected and sent to H.O.

See that this is done. Demonstrate your belief in internationalism in a truly practical manner.

Just what the International stands for, just what it seeks to do, are points clearly explained in a useful booklet which it has lately published and which can be had from the Labour Party, price sixpence.

The current issue of "The Labour Magazine" contains an interesting article on "Socialism and the Young." The writer urges that there is need for a virile propaganda among young people and asserts that if Labour cannot rally the young life of the nation to its aid then it has little hope for success. In particular is a campaign needed among those young people too young to be voters now but who will be citizens when the next election arrives.

What Leagues are Doing

THE Hebden Bridge Branch of the League was unable to be represented at the Conference, and it therefore sent by letter its comments on certain resolutions. The most interesting of these comments referred to Item 3 on the Agenda, and we give the same below in the hope that it may result in other Leagues sending along their views and record of experiences.

Branch Co-operation.

We are not in agreement with Manchester and District Federation that it is necessary to appoint an official organiser. In our opinion, the trouble is that local and divisional labour parties do not take sufficient interest in the League of Youth, and the best method of organisation is for the divisional labour agent to "work up" his own division—just as he does the Women's Sections and the labour parties. This is the method adopted by our agent in this scattered Sowerby Division. He has been the prime mover in forming three branches of the League of Youth in Sowerby—Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden. We are hoping shortly to form a Sowerby Division Federation. The advantage at election times is obvious. When any Labour Party event takes place in the division—meetings, bazaars, dances, lectures, etc., we all make a special effort to help things along. It seems to us best to work with the adult party.

In Hebden Bridge it is impossible for any one of the three sections to organise a really good meeting or lantern lecture, etc., but we combine and so have many events which would otherwise be out of the question. Of course, the position in towns, where there is a large membership to call upon, is no doubt different. With regard to advisory councils, these undoubtedly have great advantages, but don't you think that some Leagues of Youth seem to think that travelling around the country is getting something done, and that when a committee has duly met all is in order? We think it is sometimes the case that leagues seek to organise anywhere except where it is most needed, that is, in their own division. Our branch gives great assistance to the local Trades Club.

"We are only a small branch," concludes the Secretary, "but I think a satisfactory one. We hold always one and sometimes two or three events per week. During the summer camping and rambling has been popular with us, and a few enthusiasts are continuing to ramble in winter.

We have found an excellent plan for keeping members interested during winter months is to hold an event every Sunday night at the home of one or another of our members—we take it in turns—and have pie suppers, mock parliaments, debates, carol singing, etc. Our parents usually provide eatables free of charge, and we charge our members 9d. each for the evening (supper included). We have made quite a lot of money for our funds in this way. Sometimes at these affairs a member of the adult party gives a short address. On one or two occasions we had a German Esperantist with us.

FOOTBALL CLUBS.

Sport activities are being encouraged by local Leagues, but here and there branches find it difficult to fix up matches. East Ham North Branch writes:—

"Dear Sir,

"The East Ham North Branch of the League of Youth is about to form a Football Club but unfortunately some of the players are shop assistants and cannot play on Saturday afternoons. Therefore the only convenient time when we could play would be Sunday mornings, and as most clubs play on Saturday afternoons, I think we should have some difficulty in arranging matches for Sunday mornings.

"I shall be pleased if you could give me any advice as to whom I might get in touch with to arrange such matches and if any branches of the L.O.Y. have clubs, and on what day they play. Providing we can get over this difficulty I see no reason why this should not be a success and would probably help to increase our membership.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) C. CARPENTER,

96, Sherrard Gate, E.7.

LEEDS REPORT.

Many times we have had occasion to praise the work of the Leagues of Youth in the Leeds district, but the second annual report of the Leeds Advisory Committee shows that even greater praise is merited by the work of the past year.

To give a full account of the manifold activities which the Committee has sponsored during the year is not possible. A brief résumé will, however, help Leagues in other areas to see what useful educational work the branches can foster and will also serve to show how useful Advisory Committees can become when rightly organised.

Lectures have covered such subjects as Youth and Health, Disarmament, Russia, India, French Life and Work, Germany, Good Literature, etc., etc. Central lectures have been organised by the Advisory Committee, and in addition to these eighteen League members are attending L.E.A. evening schools, 16 W.E.A. classes, 12 N.C.L.C. lectures. The Committee has wisely secured the help of local Government officers for its lectures and both the Deputy City Librarian and the Assistant Medical Officer have addressed the members. Other Leagues might note this.

Increased Membership.

A Day School has been organised and an attendance of a hundred secured. Another very useful feature was the inauguration of a class aiming to explain to students the purpose of the League, the duties of its officers and the qualifications needed to hold the various positions in the organisation.

Publicity has been secured for the League work in the local press, a member being responsible for this work. A speakers' list has been compiled and has proved very useful.

Sports and recreations have not been neglected, rambles have been organised and a swimming club. Advisory Committee members have regularly visited branches and have thus kept in touch with local activities. There are eleven branches in Leeds, six of which have been organised during the year. They have a total membership of 250 and already fifty per cent. of the members have their international membership cards.

A New Pamphlet

THE new pamphlet (price 1d.) on League of Youth organisation merits a big sale. Every branch should have a supply. It explains the objects of the League and gives its rules and standing orders in full. Many suggestions concerning useful activities for branches are given and the duties of local officers are clearly defined. Published practically at cost price, it is hoped that all branches will take a good supply and will see that a wide circulation is secured.

We want bigger and better branches for the League. We want livelier and more useful activities. This pamphlet is full of sound and helpful hints. Write to Press Dept., Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, *now*.

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NOTICE.

"The League of Youth Monthly Bulletin" is issued by the Press and Publicity Department of the Labour Party. By arrangement with the "Labour Organiser" it is first published in the pages of that journal, from which it is reprinted for wider circulation.

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STUDY COURSES ON ELECTORAL LAW AND ORGANISATION.

Our readers will be interested to learn that a new series of Correspondence Courses is about to commence under the Labour Party Scheme for Study and Examination in the above subjects.

The Study Course is open to agents and organisers of the Party desiring to revise their knowledge of election law and administration, and to qualify for a certificate by examination, and also to persons in the Party who are desirous of becoming agents, and who by taking the courses and qualifying by examination for the certificate may equip themselves for competent service as future agents. The Course is further open to persons in the Party who by taking some or all of the Courses desire to make themselves more efficient as officials especially in the conduct of local elections.

For the benefit of new readers unacquainted with the scheme we should add that the course is arranged on a correspondence basis, and each month a booklet of loose-leaf notes and folios is posted to the students. The notes are divided for weekly reading, and a number of questions are required to be answered and posted to the Head Office at the end of each study month. The

answers are reviewed and duly returned with comments and suggestions.

At the conclusion of the courses, which normally cover a period of about eight or nine months, a series of examinations are held in suitable centres throughout the country. Markings are awarded both for answers to the questions in the monthly sets, and for papers and oral questions taken at the examination.

Persons who desire to take the Courses and who have not already enrolled should immediately communicate with the Registrar of Study Courses, c/o the Labour Party. The fee for the Course is 15/6, including booklets. Though it is possible for anyone to work through the Courses without the purchase of expensive law books, it is desirable that certain reference books should be purchased. The National Executive has come to the aid of students in this matter and necessary text books may be obtained on an instalment plan of payments.

The following syllabus of the Courses should be of interest to all our readers, and also help to enlighten them regarding the wide field on which knowledge is necessary in a fully qualified agent:—

(See next page.)

Course A.—The Law relating to the practice of Parliamentary Elections.

The Notes are based on Parker's "*Election Agent*," and form a digest of the law.

The election agent and staff, the returning officer, the candidate, canvassers, committee rooms, printing, meetings, associations, the election, writ, notice, nomination, polling districts, vehicles, the poll, the count, election expenses, return and declarations, corrupt and illegal practices, penalties, prosecutions, application for relief, petitions, &c.

Courses B and C.—The Law relating to the practice of Elections for Municipal Boroughs, County Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Urban Districts, Rural Districts, Parish Councils.

The Notes are compilations of sections and excerpts from the various statutes, conveniently arranged, and annotated under appropriate headings for each election separately.

Constitution of council, councillors, qualifications, disqualifications, casual vacancies, election, notice, nomination, corrupt and illegal practices, staff committee rooms, meetings, conveyances, printing, the poll, the count, declaration, expenses and returns, petitions, &c.

NOTE.—*Courses B and C will be based on Scottish statutes for persons in Scotland.*

Course D.—The Representation of the People Acts, the Franchises, Registration.

The parliamentary franchises, full age, legal incapacities, residence, business premises university qualification, service qualifications, successive residence and occupation, local government franchises, incapacities, occupying, owner or tenant, land or premises, service franchise, dwelling house, lodger, joint occupancy, qualifying period, disqualifications, registration, form of register, absent voters, lists, claims, objections, registration rules, registration court, proxy votes, &c.

Course E.—Labour Party Constitution and Rules.

General principles underlying the Constitution and Rules, powers and procedure of Annual Conference and the National Executive Committee.

Constituency and Local Rules, consideration of the relative structure and equipoise of parts.

Course F.—Conduct of Elections.

The organisation and management of Parliamentary Elections.

The practical conduct of Municipal and Local Elections.

Course G.—Party Administration and Organisation.

A Labour Party, general committee, executive, sub-committees, chairman, secretary, treasurer, organiser, general scheme of administration and organisation for urban and rural areas, ward committees, polling districts, women's sections, street organisation, conserving and increasing membership, affiliated membership, &c.

Public activities, propaganda, literature, publicity, creation of civic interest and opinion, public representatives, stimulating interest of trade union branches, &c.

Phone
Birmingham Central 0311

THE LINE ENGAGED

ANSWERED OVER THE PHONE



HELLO? Birmingham Central 0311 speaking! Yes? No you must not use your licensed Labour Club as your Central Committee Room in your Municipal By-election. Yes? We know you used it in the Parliamentary election, but there are two Corrupt Practices Acts, and the one applying to Municipal Elections prohibits the use of licensed premises either as Committee Rooms or for meetings.

Hello? You want to know why your Town Clerk does not attempt to fill the vacancy created by your late Councillor's death? When did he die? Last November? When does his term of office expire? In March? The answer is that the regulations governing District Council Elections prohibit a returning officer from filling a casual vacancy if the casual vacancy occurs within six months of the ordinary retirement.

Hello? Hello? You want to know if a delegate from a Socialist Society is disqualified if he is not a member of his or her appropriate Trades Union? The model rules of the Labour Party which apply this principle to individual members do not go quite as far as this, but no person is allowed to act as a delegate who does not contribute to the political fund of his or her Trades Union.

Hello? "Labour Organiser" speaking. Where can you get photo blocks and how can you get blocks which will "come up" well in your monthly paper? Try Graphic Engravers Ltd., Rupert Street, Bristol, or Siviter Smith & Co., Ludgate Hill, Birmingham. For coarse paper you want a coarse screen, say 65. Send a sample of your paper to the blockmaker and leave it to him.

Birmingham Central 0311. Yes? Can't work your duplicator? Try washing it with petrol. It's probably dirty. How can you get the effect of large type printing for letter headings which you have seen some people use? Try Messrs. Gestetner or almost any duplicating firm who will cut an indestructible stencil for you in the style of letter heading you require. The same with illustrations.

Hello? Calling your annual meeting? Well you must give 28 days' notice "stating as far as possible the nature of the business to be transacted." Your ordinary meetings do not require so long a notice.

Yes? Speaking! Some of your delegates elected to the Executive Committee have not been reappointed by their Unions as delegates for the coming year, and you want to know about their presence at the annual meeting? You should invite these time-expired delegates to the annual meeting, which they are entitled to attend, though they may not vote. See Party rules.

Yes! Yes! You think you won't do much good in the Million Member Campaign not having an agent? Don't be silly. There are over four hundred Parties who will get over this difficulty. Why not yours? Yes, we know, of course an agent is a big asset, but you must plan your work according to your resources. The voluntary work done is certainly not less even where an agent is employed. No agent can do the Party's work.

0311? Yes? A big speaker for May Day Demonstration? Right. No, you are not too soon. You are nearly

too late for lots have booked up already. Try Mr. Maurice Webb, at the Labour Party Head Office. But why not look around to see who is booked in your neighbourhood and seek to share the speaker's time and expenses?

Hello? About the District Council Elections? We shall publish an article on this question in the February "Labour Organiser." Meantime order Statutory Rules and Orders 1931, No. 23 for Urban District Councils, or 24 for Rural District Councils. Price ninepence.

Hello? Wrong number! Hello! Hello! By-election in your Division? Drat! Municipal By-election—oh, that's different! You want to know about refreshment for workers. Well look up Harold Croft's book on "Conduct of Elections." He advises "communal tea-parties," everybody subscribing a trifle for provisions, but nothing being given away. Eh? Not a bad idea? But there won't be many fragments for the baskets if you don't charge more than ha'penny or a penny per person.

Hello? What the—Hello? Oh, you again! Think you will never get the names of Trades Unionists from the secretaries in your town? Don't despair old fellow, Rome wasn't built in a day! Begin as you began when you organised your wards. Take the best first; get what names you can, then use these as a leverage with other secretaries. Bit by bit your job will be done, but it wants patience, and it will take time.

Yes? County Federation? You want to set up a County Federation, and want to know the best basis for same? All right, we advise you to affiliate Divisional Parties only, thus making your Federation a Federation of D.L.P.'s. The time is coming when there will be much work for County or Area Federations, and perhaps a definite niche in the structure of Party organisation will fall to them in the near future.

Hello? Still bothered about getting those lists of supporters? Thinking about making a membership appeal at your Annual Social next week? Six hundred expected, but quite half will be non-members? Well, accept a tip

from a Black Country constituency. Here all persons attending whist drives, socials, dances, etc., are asked to write their names on the back of the admission card before giving same up "to ensure that they are notified of future events"—and incidentally, of course, to supply the Party with excellent material for its Membership Canvass!

All right—go on! Danger in big membership you think? Unconverted and half-converted people will tend to water down our purpose and enthusiasm? Don't you believe it. That's the principle that you and I are God's Elect, and democracy is not to be trusted. Quite a good theory with which to defend the existence of the House of Lords, but a jolly bad one with which to excuse your indisposition to sacrifice a little leisure for the Labour Cause. Is that exchange? Line cleared?—Thank you.

Hello? Hello? Hello? Posters for the Million Member Campaign? Try the Labour Party with your suggestion; but remember the Membership Campaign is primarily selective, that is we are after those who have already voted for us. This Campaign doesn't involve a general canvass unless we are satisfied that that is the only means of reaching our actual supporters. Therefore there is less need of general publicity. It's the personal touch, and the call on the supporter that will count most.

Yes? Hello? Want to take the Study Course? Send to the Registrar of the Study Course, Transport House, Smith Square, London. The fee is 15/6 and there are certain books to buy which you may have on the instalment plan. No, if it means giving up your Party work don't take the Study Course. What you would gain on the swings you would lose on the roundabouts. Try the sacrifice of leisure in some other way. The Study Course is designed for Party and not personal benefit. Eh? you understand, and you will give something else up? Good! Good luck.

Hello? Yes, Central 0311. What does the printer mean when offering you super-calendared paper instead of art paper in response to your request for a lower-priced job? Calendared paper is

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paper which has been passed through hot revolving cylinders, which process has the effect of hardening the paper and giving it a better finish. Super-calendared paper has also been sized, but such paper is cheaper than art paper and normally requires a coarser screened block

Hello? Councillors not pulling together? Acting disunitedly at Council meetings? Injuring the Movement? Of course this sort of thing is bound to react both on the spirit of your Movement and your election chances. Is your Party not aware that Standing Orders for Labour Groups on local authorities have been approved by the National E.C. and that they are now an integral part of the constituency rules of the Party? The establishment of Council groups is obligatory and your Councillors should be called together by your Party and a group established according to rule. If amendments of the Party's Standing Orders are desired they must be submitted to the National E.C.

REGISTRATION: HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR.

Under date January 5th, the Home Office have directed Registration Officers that the appropriate forms of return (i.e. Form A or D) are again to be delivered at all premises in the course of the house-to-house inquiry to be made when compiling this year's Register. This instruction follows a consultation with the Central Offices of the political parties.

It would appear that even with the present rage for "economy" no more effective or cheaper method of securing an accurate register can be devised than by proper house-to-house enquiry and the collection of the appropriate forms filled in by the occupier.

THE STUDY AND EXAMINATION SCHEME.

Another Successful Entrant.

Will our readers please note that the name of Mr. Ray C. Roberts, of Rhymney, S. Wales, should have been included in the list of entrants who had obtained the Certificate of Proficiency?

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SPECIAL NOTICE: The Editor requires immediately a few clean and unfolded copies of November issue to complete binding orders. Full allowance made.



LAW AND PRACTICE



About the Neutrality of Returning Officers.

Frequently at Parliamentary elections Labour supporters at the count are astonished to find that the person they have regarded as the Returning Officer is after all only a deputy, and that the real returning officer is one of the County magnates or local bigwigs high up in the counsels of the Tory Party. This is because the returning officer is ordinarily the Sheriff—a post which one does not ordinarily find occupied by members of the Local Labour Party. Generally, however, the whole of the returning officer's duties are delegated to the acting returning officer, who in turn is generally the County or Borough Clerk, or some "deputy acting returning officer" appointed by the latter person. The Sheriff sometimes, instead of delegating all his functions, turns up to make the declaration.

In Municipal Elections the returning officer is ordinarily the Mayor or an Alderman, though where the Mayor is unable to act and there is a deficiency of Aldermen a Councillor may be appointed as returning officer.

In Urban and Rural District Council Elections, the returning officer is ordinarily the clerk to the District Council, but the Council may appoint some "other person" if the clerk is unwilling to act, and failing this course the returning officer is "a person" appointed by the County Council.

In view of the variety of persons who might be called upon to perform the responsible judicial and administrative duties required of the returning officer in the various classes of elections, it is well that the legislature has taken steps to secure, as far as possible, the impartiality and impartial conduct of all acting in this high office.

In the first place heavy penalties are placed upon returning officers for any

wilful act or omission in contravention of the Statutes. Under one Act a breach in respect of the provisions of that Act is punishable by a forfeit of £500. The forfeit under the Ballot Act is £100. These penalties are additional to other penalties and liabilities in respect of the particular act complained of.

All the liabilities of a returning officer in the above respect are extended also to presiding officers, clerks or any other officials employed by the R.O.

The most important provisions, however, for securing the impartiality of returning officers and their staffs are those which aim at securing the total abstention of the official staff from taking any part in the election contest.

Under an Act of 1867 no returning officer, nor his deputy, nor any partner or clerk of either of them, shall act as agent for any candidate in the management or conduct of the election. The Ballot Act, 1872, extends these sweeping disqualifications to every officer appointed by the returning officer. Thus it will be seen that not only are returning officers, acting deputy returning officers, presiding officers, clerks and counters disqualified from acting as agents for candidates, but their partners and any clerks they employ in their private capacity are also disqualified.

Note also that the term "agents" is not confined to the Statutory definition of an election agent, but is used apparently in its widest sense.

A still further attempt is made under the rules of the Ballot Act to keep partisans from holding official office. Rule 49 says "no person shall be appointed by a returning officer for the purpose of an election, who has been employed by any other person in or about the election."

The above provisions relate to Parliamentary elections, but exactly the same provisions and the whole of them, apply to Municipal and County Council Elections.

Under the rules which govern District Council Elections, a slightly changed form of words is used, but the provisions are substantially the same.

Careful readers will have seen a loophole in all the above provisions which are obviously designed to secure the impartiality of all the official staff. There is no provision which makes it an offence for any official to take sides during an election. It is fortunate, however that the good sense of the British public takes umbrage at any abuse of official impartiality and also that the traditions of public service frown on any breach of this sort. Most R.O.'s will not permit it in their employees.

There is a curious lack of uniformity about the provisions regarding the right of officials to vote.

At a Parliamentary election the Returning Officer, *if an elector*, may give a casting vote, but may not vote otherwise. His employees, if electors, may vote, and special provisions enable them to vote at the station where they act, even if registered elsewhere.

At a Municipal or County Council election the Returning Officer may give a casting vote whether an elector or no, and he may also vote in the ordinary way if entitled. The R.O.'s employees may vote but they lack the special facility given in Parliamentary elections.

In District Council elections the Returning Officer is placed in the same position as at a Parliamentary election, i.e., a casting vote, if an elector, but no other vote. There is a provision, however, that a tie may be decided by lot. The presiding officer and clerks are in the same position as at a municipal election.

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In its campaign for new members the Crewe Labour Party (agent Mr. Frank Roberts) has departed from the orthodox application forms printed on leaflets and its canvassers are supplied with small duplicate carboned books instead. These books, which are bound "ten up," carry an application form to be signed by the applicant which also serves as a receipt to be signed by the canvasser or collector. The new member gets the top copy and the bottom serves for official purposes. It is stated that the method has been well received and a special membership secretary has been appointed.

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